

FAITH

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Diocese of Waterford & Lismore

Celebrating and supporting faith, hope and love in the heart of the family!



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Year B 4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER: GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY

"TO THE HEIGHTS" YOUTH EDITION AVAILABLE ALSO

Sunday Mass Readings

First Reading:

Acts 4:8-12

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 117(118)

Second Reading:

1 John 3:1-2

Gospel:

John 10:11-18

"The good shepherd is one who lays his life down for his sheep."



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Hear

Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading. Don't have one? No worries, you can find this week's readings online [here](#).

Check out [this video](#) on the readings for children.

Pray

In the Gospel today we find ourselves with Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

- What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this piece of Scripture? How do these words resonate with you personally?
- Allow yourself some time to contemplate the image of Jesus the Good Shepherd. Imagine that you are that lamb, nestled close to Him, close enough to hear His gentle voice and the beat of His heart. Stay in that warm and safe space for a time.
- Ask yourself in prayer, what it means for your own personal life to have Jesus as your Shepherd. Do you find it easy to hear His voice? What distractions might you need to remove? What other voices are claiming your attention? Pray for the grace to hear and respond to Him more this week.

Talk

In today's Gospel we see Jesus the Good Shepherd explaining how His sheep know His voice.

- Who are the people in your life who you can recognise just by the sound of their voice, even with just a few words on the phone?
- Whose voice do you love to hear? Maybe you associate good things with that voice, like granny coming to visit!
- How good are you at recognising someone's tone of voice and what that means?
- What kind of tone of voice do you think Jesus speaks to you in?
- Is there space in your home to hear the voice of Jesus, or is there always a lot of noise? Is there a way that, as a family, you could create quiet time to let Jesus speak His word into your hearts?

Family Challenge!

Write down the names of all the priests, deacons and seminarians that your family knows and say a special prayer for them this week.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

The fourth Sunday of Easter is also called Good Shepherd Sunday. In each of the three lectionary cycles, our Gospel is taken from the 10th chapter of the Gospel of John. In Cycle B, we hear the middle verses of this chapter. Unless we consider this chapter in the greater context of John's Gospel, we will miss the radical nature of the statement Jesus makes when he declares himself to be the Good Shepherd.

This chapter of John's Gospel follows Jesus' healing of the man born blind and the rejection of this miracle by the Jewish leaders who question Jesus' authority to heal. Jesus responds to this challenge by calling himself the Good Shepherd. He is criticizing the leadership of the Pharisees and the other Jewish leaders. The Pharisees and other Jewish leaders are so angry that they attempt to stone and arrest Jesus (see John 10:31,39). This controversy with the religious leaders continues until Jesus' death.

In the portion of the chapter that we hear proclaimed today, Jesus describes his relationship with his followers as similar to the relationship between a good shepherd and his sheep. As a good shepherd will risk and lay down his life in order to protect his sheep, Jesus willingly sacrifices himself for the sake of his sheep. Jesus contrasts the actions of the good shepherd with the actions of the hired shepherd who abandons the sheep in the face of danger. In the verses following Jesus' teaching, we learn that the Pharisees and the other religious leaders understand that Jesus is referring to them when he describes the hired shepherds.

The concern of a good shepherd for his sheep is part of the shepherd's job. Jesus says, however, that the actions of the good shepherd are based upon the relationship that develops between the shepherd and the sheep. This is at the heart of the difference between the good shepherd and the hired shepherd. The good shepherd knows the sheep and therefore acts out of love. For the Good Shepherd, this is never simply part of a job; this love-in-action is integral to his identity.

As with so much of John's Gospel, one hears in this passage John's particular focus on Christology. As the sheep are known by the Good Shepherd, the Father knows Jesus and Jesus knows the Father. There is an essential unity between the Father and the Son. The freedom with which Jesus acts when he lays down his life is rooted in the unity that he shares with his Father.

In this context, Jesus also refers to others with whom he shares a relationship. By this reference, John probably understands the eventual inclusion of the Gentiles in the Christian community. Our modern ears hear this as a reference to Christian unity. The work of ecumenism is to restore unity among all Christians so that we form one flock under one shepherd, as God desires.

Loyola Press Sunday Connection

Check
this
out

VOCATIONS IRELAND

Vocations Ireland is an office made up from members of the many Religious Sisters, Brothers and Priests from Congregations, Societies, Contemplative and Missionary communities in Ireland. Our Mission is to discern, foster and encourage vocations to Religious and Missionary life.

Click here for: [Diocese of Waterford & Lismore Vocation Information / Diocesan Prayer for Vocations](#)



WHAT'S MY VOCATION?

What do you think you are called to do in life? To be a doctor? An architect? A teacher? Work in I.T. or marketing? Get married? Raise a family? Become a priest or a religious brother or sister? That last one can sound a bit off-putting at times. We can often (wrongly) associate a religious vocation with loneliness and giving up the things in life that make us happy. However, nothing could be further from the truth - if God is calling you to religious life, that is His plan for your maximum happiness! If he's calling you to marriage, then that's His plan for your maximum happiness. Ultimately, each of our vocations, or callings, is to be holy, to be a saint. Carlo Acutis understood this so well. At one stage he desired to be a priest, and yet he knew in his short life this would never be a possibility. Does that mean Carlo had no vocation? Absolutely not! He had a vocation to be a saint, and he lived out that vocation joyfully each day of his young life. Was it easy? Probably not. Was it worth it? Yes! He gained Heaven, and at the end of the day, that's what matters most. Pray to God to discover your vocation, because His plan for you is His plan for you to achieve heaven!

▶ [What's my Vocation? \(Fr Mike Schmitz\)](#)

▶ [Today I Choose \(Brian Doerksen\)](#)

To the Heights Youth Resource also available



Family Prayer

*Jesus, You are our Good Shepherd.
You laid down Your life for us. You know us
individually. You love us totally. You guard us
and defend us. Keep us always close to
You. May we always listen to Your voice
and never be led astray. Amen*

EVENTS

"Rooted in Christ" - Cherished Catholic Women's Ministry Retreat: Glencomeragh House, Kilsheelan, Co. Tipperary E91H584. April 26th - 28th. Cost: €220
Join us for our third annual Cherished Retreat as we discover our dignity as women of God, rooted in Christ! Mass | Adoration | Rosary | Healing Service | Confession | Testimonies | Creative Workshops | Fellowship | Tea & Chats! For more info: Shauna (087) 1378364. To book: info@holymission.ie or call 052 6133181 (Age 18+)

Nightfever: St Peter's and Paul's Church, Clonmel. Friday 3rd May from 6pm - 9pm. Adoration, Candlelit, music, confessions available.

International Exhibition of Eucharistic Miracles around the World: Designed and created by Blessed Carlo Acutis. April 28th - 12th May at Sacred Heart Church, The Folly, Waterford. Solemn Opening at 3pm on April 28th. Mon - Fri: 10am - 5pm / Sat: 11am - 5pm / sun 2pm - 6pm. Closed for lunch 1-2pm.

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